

- Inflation rate reaches 2.1% in December
- Retail sales slip for a third straight month in November, falling 1.5%
- Sawmill production down 2.2% in November

Prices

- British Columbia's year-over-year inflation rate jumped 0.6 percentage points to 2.1% in December as energy prices climbed (+4.1%, relative to the same month of 2005) after easing off during the fall. Prices at the pump rose substantially (+8.3%) but piped gas (-10.4%) and fuel oil (-6.6%) cost less than in December 2005. Excluding energy products, BC's inflation rate would have been a slightly more modest 1.8%.

Fuel prices, together with vehicle insurance (+5.0%) and parts & maintenance costs (+4.0%), drove transportation (+3.4%) costs up last month, as consumers paid more for both public (+5.6%) and private (+3.1%) transportation.

BC residents also paid 2.2% more for shelter and faced higher costs for household furnishings (+2.5%), as furniture prices soared (+10.1%) after declining earlier in the year. The cost of food (+2.4%) purchased from stores (+1.2%) and restaurants (+4.4%) continued to rise, as did prices for health & personal care products & services (+1.9%).

In Vancouver, the inflation rate was 2.6%, while Victoria residents faced a more moderate increase of 1.5%.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

- In December, the year-over-year inflation rate in Alberta was 4.7%, nearly triple the national average, as labour shortages and a steady demand for housing and other services continued to put upward pressure on prices. Although energy (+6.2%) was a factor in the increase, soaring shelter costs (+15.5%), especially for owned accommodation (+20.7%), also played a big role.

BC and Alberta were the only provinces to see year-over-year inflation rates top the two percent mark. Canada's inflation rate was 1.6%,

due mostly to increases in the cost of shelter (+3.8%) and food (+2.2%). *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

The Economy

- Sales by retailers in the province slipped 1.5% (seasonally adjusted) in November, posting a third straight monthly decline. Canadian sales inched up 0.2% as a two-month-long downturn came to an end. BC and Alberta (-0.5%) were the only provinces where sales remained weak. Elsewhere, retailers bounced back from a slow October, posting gains ranging from 0.3% in Saskatchewan and Quebec to 2.3% in PEI. Increases in Quebec and Ontario (+0.7%) were both above the Canadian average.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

- Production at BC sawmills was 2.2% lower last November than in the same month of 2005. Mills in coastal regions of the province posted a particularly large decline (-12.0%), while production from Interior mills dropped off marginally (-0.5%). Canadian production was off 5.4%, as volume was down in most of the big lumber-producing provinces.

Data Source: SC, Catalogue 35-003-XIE

- The number of British Columbians receiving regular employment insurance (EI) benefits inched down 0.8% (seasonally adjusted) in November, to 37,680. Except for Ontario (+0.0%) all provinces saw a drop in the number of EI beneficiaries in November, led by Alberta (-3.6%) and Newfoundland & Labrador (-2.2%). Nationally, there was a 1.6% decrease.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

2006 in Review

- British Columbia's annual inflation rate was 1.8% in 2006, slightly lower than the national rate, which was 2.0%. Lower-than-average increases in the cost of food (+1.9%, compared to a national average of 2.3%) and shelter (+2.4%,

Did you know...

Canadians rate fire-fighters (93%) as the most trustworthy profession, followed by nurses (87%), pharmacists (86%) and pilots (81%). CEOs (21%), local politicians (12%) and car sales-people (7%) are among those listed as least trustworthy. *Source: Ipsos-Reid*

compared to +3.6% nationally) helped offset higher-than-average increases in the cost of transportation (+3.4%, compared to 3.9% nationally) and health & personal care (+1.6%, compared to 1.2% nationally).

Canadian homeowners faced higher prices for utilities, as electric power rates (+5.7%) rose at the same time that prices for piped gas (+3.1%) and fuel oil (+4.6%) were climbing. In BC, consumers faced slightly lower increases in the cost of oil (+3.0%), while gas (+1.5%) and electricity (+2.2%) prices rose at just half the national rate. However, British Columbians grappled with bigger increases in the cost of gasoline (+6.9%) than in Canada as a whole (+5.5%).

Overall, energy costs in BC (+4.7%) rose less than the national average (+5.1%) and prices for other goods and services also increased at a slightly lower rate (+1.5%, compared to 1.7% nationally).

Vancouver's inflation rate was 1.9%, while prices in Victoria rose 1.6% during 2006.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **Vancouver International Airport was the second-busiest airport in the country in 2006, after Toronto's Pearson Airport.** Last year, 322,307 aircraft took off or landed in Vancouver, down slightly (-0.2%) from 2005. Victoria International Airport saw a more significant decline in aircraft movement (-3.6% to 145,140) while Abbotsford recorded an increase in traffic (+4.3% to 159,814). Toronto's international airport was by far the busiest in 2006 with 417,183 aircraft arrivals and departures, a 1.4% increase over the previous year. The 42 largest Canadian airports reported 4.5 million take-offs and landings in 2006, up 2.9% from 2005. The overall boost in national air traffic was due in part to a substantially higher number of take offs and landings at Alberta's main airports.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

Aboriginal Labour Force

- **Between 2001 and 2005, BC and Manitoba had the highest Aboriginal employment growth rates in the West.** The employment rate for off-

reserve Aboriginals in the province climbed from 51.4% to 56.1% over the five-year period. The participation rate of BC's Aboriginal population also increased, reaching 66.0% in 2005, up 2.5 percentage points from 2001. By comparison, the participation rate for the non-Aboriginal population was 65.6% in 2005. Among other western provinces, off-reserve Aboriginals in Alberta had the highest participation rate (70.0%), while those in Saskatchewan had the lowest (61.7%).

The gap in unemployment rates between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations has narrowed in all western provinces since 2001. In 2005, BC's Aboriginal population had an unemployment rate of 15.0%, which was still high, but down more than four percentage points from 2001 (19.1%). Over the same period, unemployment rates for non-Aboriginals decreased less than two percentage points (from 7.4% in 2001 to 5.6% in 2005).

Data Source: Statistics Canada

Work Hours

- **In 2004, BC workers aged 25 to 54 worked an average of 1,790 hours a year, the equivalent of 34.4 hours a week for a full-year worker.** With an annual average of 1,880 hours, or 36.2 hours a week, Albertans worked the longest hours, followed by workers in Saskatchewan-Manitoba (1,860) and Ontario (1,850). Workers in Quebec (1,750) spent less time on the job than other Canadians. Reasons for the regional differences include factors such as cultural differences, variations in tax incentives, regulations and preferences.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

Energy

- **BC's colder-than-normal temperatures contributed to an overall increase in natural gas sales in November.** Nationally, sales totalled nearly 6,900 million cubic metres in November, up 9.6% from the same month of 2005. Sales jumped 13.9% in the Canadian residential sector while the commercial (+9.7%) and industrial (+7.5%) sectors also posted increases.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

*Infoline Issue: 07-04
January 26th, 2007*

Contact: Jade Norton (250) 387-6056
Originally published in *Small Business Quarterly* Issue 06-3

Female Enterprise in British Columbia

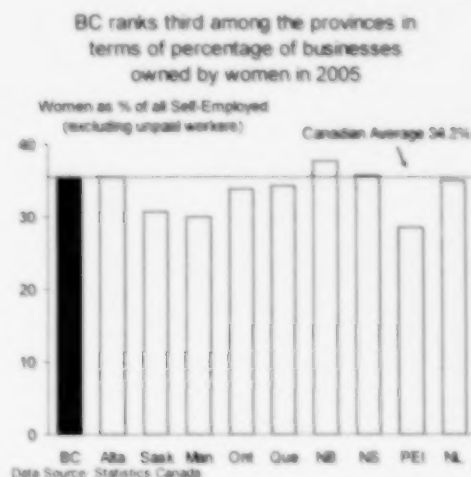
In November 2006, *PROFIT* magazine announced its annual *W100* list of top (by revenue) Canadian women business owners. In 2006, emphasis on the growth of their businesses was of key importance for these successful businesswomen. Indeed, this year's top ranked businesses managed to employ an average of 100 people, produce average revenues of \$27.5 million (up almost \$2 million from 2005), and post a three-year average growth rate of 137%. In addition, some of these female entrepreneurs have become successful in industries that have traditionally been dominated by men, including construction and manufacturing.¹

How does BC compare to other provinces?

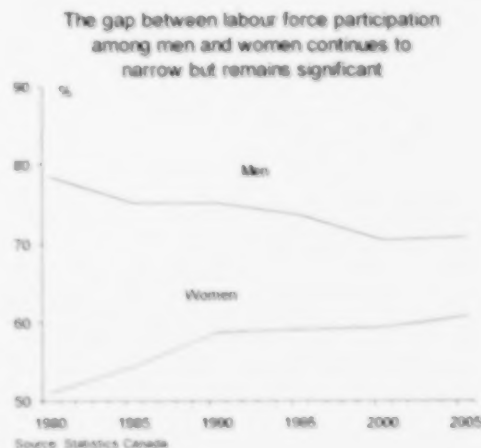
As in the rest of the country, women entrepreneurs in British Columbia are making some important strides for business in the province. In 2005, approximately 35% of all business owners in British Columbia were women. This was above the national average of 34% and the third highest rate among the provinces. BC was on par with Alberta (35%), and behind only Nova Scotia (36%) and New Brunswick (38%) in terms of the share of businesses owned by women.

Since 1995, the average annual growth for self-employed women in the province has been 3.8%, compared to 3.2% for men. Of course the overall gap between male and female labour force participation has also narrowed substantially over the same period, which partially explains why there are proportionately more women business

owners compared to the past decade and especially compared to 25 years ago.



The proportion of British Columbia business owners that are women has increased by over eight percentage points in the last 25 years, from 27% in 1980. Though inarguably significant, this is likely, at least in part, a result of increasing participation by women in the labour force. Labour force

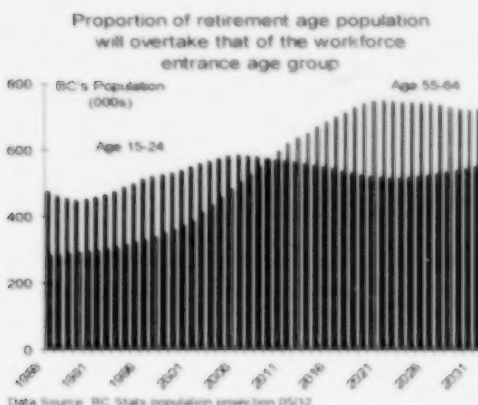


¹Profit Magazine's *W100*, 2006 ranking list and overview. <http://www.canadianbusiness.com>

participation by women in British Columbia increased from about 51% in 1980 to around 61% in 2005. Over the same period, the participation rate of men dropped from 79% to 71%. In coming years, participation rates for both men and women are expected to fall as the population ages.²

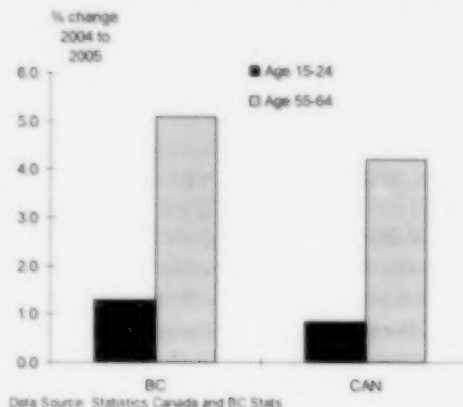
BC's ageing population

Along with BC's ageing population comes the risk of long-term labour shortages. Employers in small, medium, and large enterprises alike are having more difficulty finding and retaining qualified employees to fill ever increasing numbers of job vacancies.³



Although immigration is an important component in addressing the labour shortage, it will not be sufficient to solve the problem. The proportion of BC's population who are over the age of 65 will continue to grow.

BC's older labour force population is growing at a faster rate than Canada's



Partly as a response to the possibility of such a labour shortage, in BC's 2006 budget,⁴ the government committed to spend \$90 million over the next three years towards new tax credits for training and also increased support of programs encouraging increased participation of groups underrepresented in the labour force such as First Nations, disadvantaged youth, older workers and women.

There has also been dialogue surrounding retirement age in BC and in Canada as a whole. The average overall retirement age for women in Canada remains lower than that of men, and the gap is more substantial among the self-employed. Among all retirees in Canada, the average age for men was 63 in 2005, compared to 61 for women. The self-employed in general tend to retire at a later average age than the general workforce. The average retirement age for self-employed women in 2005 was 63 years, down from nearly 65 in 2004. The average retirement age for self-employed men also decreased in 2005, dropping from 68 to 67 years, but remained significantly higher than that of their female counterparts.

² The participation rate is based on the population 15 and over, which means as a larger proportion of the population reaches retirement age, overall labour force participation will decline.

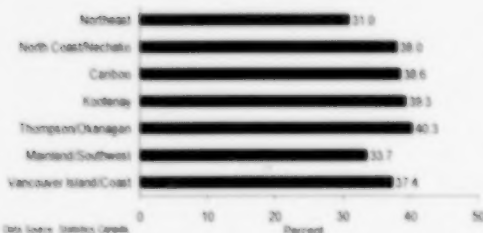
³ For more information on labour shortage, see the 1st Quarter 2006 issue of the *Small Business Quarterly*, "Now Hiring: BC Labour Well Running Dry"

⁴ October 2005 news release from the BC Chamber of Commerce: www.bcchamber.org

BC's regions differ

In 2005, approximately 15% of working women in BC were self-employed, compared to 24% of working men. These percentages were up for men over the past five years (up from 22% in 2000), but remained unchanged for women (15% in 2000).

The Thompson/Okanagan region has the highest proportion of self-employed that are women

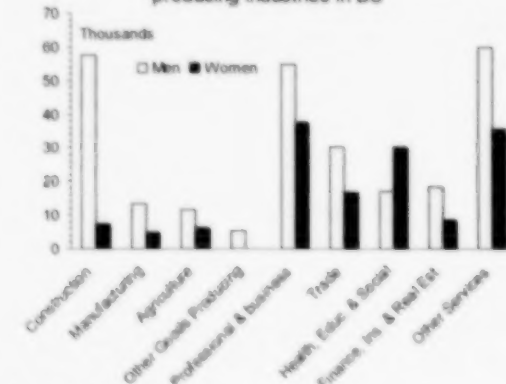


At 40%, the Thompson/Okanagan Region had the highest percentage of self-employed who were women last year. The Northeast had the lowest percentage, with women comprising only 31% of the self-employed in that region. The Northeast has, of late, shown the most significant growth in the province in terms of self-employment. However, the lower proportion of self-employed women in this region is not surprising given its reliance on generally male-dominated goods producing industries (primary industry) such as oil and gas extraction. However, the Mainland/ Southwest (33.7%) region was also significantly lower than other regions in the province, which seems contradictory, since women are more likely to work in the service professions compared to men and the Lower Mainland is more service-oriented than the remainder of the province. On the other hand, it is possible that there are fewer opportunities for paid employment for women outside the Lower Mainland driving them to create their own prospects.

Industry breakdown

Not only are women in general more likely to work in a service-related industry (91% of women compared to 68% of men in 2005), but this is also true of self-employed women (87% versus 67% of men).

Few self-employed women work in goods producing industries in BC

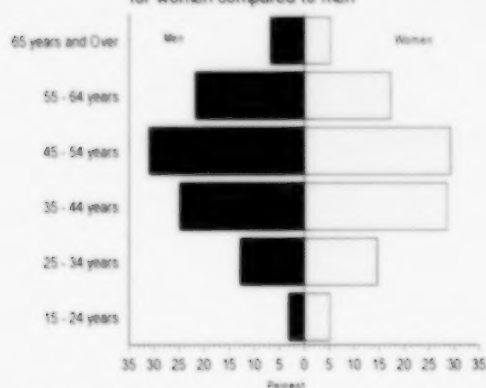


Last year, the one industry sector where self-employed women outnumbered men was in health and social services (30,100 compared to 17,000 respectively). In all other industry aggregations, men outnumbered women, particularly in the goods producing industries. Professional & Business services (approximately 37,400 self-employed workers) is the industry aggregation with the most self-employed women, followed by Health, Education & Social services (30,100). Most self-employed men, on the other hand, work in the Construction (approximately 57,400) and Professional & Business (54,700) industries.

Young women entrepreneurs

Another way that self-employed women differ from self-employed men is in the age distribution. Self-employed women generally tend to be younger than their male counterparts.

The age distribution of self-employed in BC is somewhat younger for women compared to men



Source: Statistics Canada

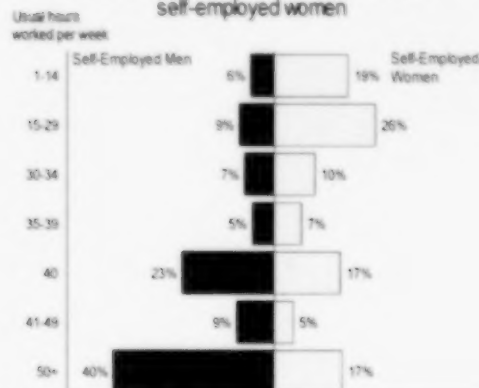
Growth rates among the younger age aggregates have also been higher for women entrepreneurs over the past decade. For example, BC's population of self-employed men aged 25 to 34 decreased by 13.2% from 1995 to 2005 while the same age group expanded by 18.7% among self-employed women. Young entrepreneurs aged 15 to 24 years make up over five percent of all self-employed women, but only three percent of self-employed men. There are also greater proportions of self-employed women aged 25 to 34 years (15% compared to 13% for men) and 35 to 44 years (29% versus 25%). Men, on the other hand, are more represented among the higher age aggregates.

Hours Worked

There is a substantial difference between self-employed women and self-employed men in terms of the usual number of hours worked per week. On average, self-employed women have shorter work days compared to their male counterparts. While a significant share of male business owners work in excess of 50 hours per week (40%), only 17% of self-employed women fit in this category. In 2005, the average work week for self-employed women was 31.6 hours, compared to 43.8 hours for men. The disparity between male and female business owners in terms of hours worked per week has remained comparatively unchanged

over the last five years and could result from a myriad of reasons, such as the types of businesses owned by women compared to men and the motivations behind the decision to become self-employed.

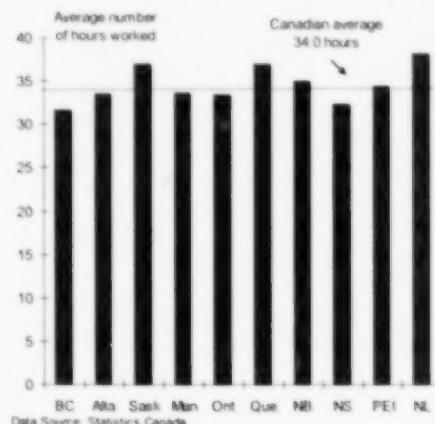
Self-employed men tend to work longer hours than self-employed women



Data Source: Statistics Canada

Women business owners in BC also worked fewer average usual hours per week in 2005 than their counterparts in every other province. With an average of 38.1 hours in their usual workweek, self-employed women in Newfoundland & Labrador recorded the highest average in Canada and BC had the lowest. Again, these disparities are likely attributable to the type of businesses operating in particular provinces.

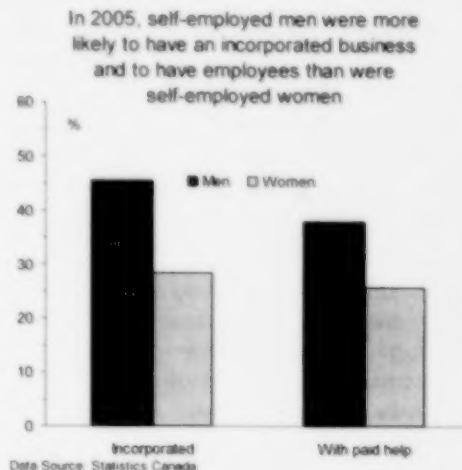
Self-employed women in BC tend to work fewer hours per week



Data Source: Statistics Canada

Class of self-employment

A far smaller percentage of businesses owned by women were incorporated (28%) compared to those owned by men (45%) in 2005. However, this proportion has been rising in recent years. For example, in 1995, only 25% of businesses owned by women in the province were incorporated. Women also continued to be less likely to have paid employees (26%) than men (38%) last year. The number of businesses operating with paid employees has shrunk considerably for those owned by both men and women over the past decade. In 1995, approximately 50% of businesses owned by men had paid employees and 28% of those owned by women.



Future growth

According to a recent report by CIBC World Markets, if the current pace of growth in women entrepreneurship is maintained in Canada, the number of women-run enterprises will top the one-million mark by the end of the decade.⁵ In more ways than one, BC's women business owners appear poised to play a significant role in the predicted progression

⁵ CIBC World Markets Economics and Strategy Research: <http://research.cibcwm.com>

Pre-conference Workshop
"Statistics for Market Analysis"

Through lectures, discussions, and a case study, workshop participants will learn how to incorporate statistics into business and economic planning. The workshop covers information about Statistics Canada data that you can use for market analysis and positioning in order to take advantage of business opportunities.

March 5, 2007 8:30am - 4:30pm
 Workshop Fee \$95.00 + GST
 (Not included in conference fee)
 Register early, space is limited!

**Welcome! Networking Reception
 & Entertainment**

Featuring a live performance by Intellifunk -
 2006 Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards Finalists
 for Best Blues Album and Best Group.

March 5, 2007 6:00pm - 9:00pm
 Location: Victoria Conference Centre, 720 Douglas St.

Conference Accommodation

Until Feb 3/07, a special rate of **\$90.00** per night
 is available at

The Fairmont Empress Hotel
 721 Government Street
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Toll free: 1-800-441-1414

Email: theempress@fairmont.com

For on-line reservations: quote GRTOL1

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Exhibitor Booths & Trade Show

Space is available to promote your business or
 organization. For more information and rates,
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REGISTRATION

This information will appear on your ID badge, please print
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Pre-conference Workshop - Mar 5/07 \$95 + GST \$ _____

Conference - March 6/07

Early Bird (before Feb 14/07)	\$149 + GST
Regular Rate	\$199 + GST
Group of 5 (before Feb 14/07)	\$550 + GST \$ _____

(attach list of names, titles and organizations)

TOTAL: \$ _____

Method of Payment

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 the "Receiver General of Canada" and enclose with your registration.

Cancellation Policy: The registration fee will be refunded (less a \$75 administration charge)
 if written notice is received by Feb 14/07. After that date, no refund will be given.

Aussi disponible en français

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TOOLS for SUCCESS:

Using Data in Aboriginal Communities



Victoria Conference Centre
 720 Douglas St.
 March 6, 2007
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 Développement social Canada



Ministry of
 Economic Relations
 and Development

AGENDA

Monday, March 5th, 2007

Pre-conference Workshop

8:30am - 4:30pm Pre-conference Workshop
"Statistics for Market Analysis"

Reception & Entertainment

5:00pm - 7:00pm Conference Registration Opens

6:00pm - 9:00pm Reception & Live Performance by Intellifunk

Tuesday, March 6th, 2007

Conference Agenda & Exhibits

7:00am - 8:00am Conference Registration Opens

8:00am - 5:00pm Exhibits Open

8:00am - 8:45am Continental Breakfast

8:45am - 9:30am Welcome & Opening Remarks

9:30am - 10:30am Plenary Session

10:30am - 10:50am Break

10:50am - 12:00pm Breakout Session I

12:00pm - 1:30pm Luncheon & Keynote Speaker
Chief Clarence Louie,
Ososyoos Indian Band

1:30pm - 2:45pm Breakout Session II

2:45pm - 3:00pm Break

3:00pm - 4:15pm Breakout Session III

4:15pm - 4:45pm Summary & Closing Remarks

SPEAKERS

Social & Community Development

- Dan Beavon, Indian & Northern Affairs Canada
- Lauren Brown, Xaaynangaa Naay Skidegate Health Centre
- Linda Day, BC Aboriginal Capacity and Developmental Research Environment
- Eric Guimond, Indian & Northern Affairs Canada
- Cheryl Matthew, Centre for Native Policy & Research
- Marie Patry, Statistics Canada
- Gwen Phillips, Ktunaxa Nation
- Michael Sadler, First Nations Social Development Society
- Christa Williams, First Nations Education Steering Committee

Economic Development

- Chief Ron Ignace, Skeetchestn Band
- Grand Chief Ed John, National Aboriginal Economic Development Board
- André Le Dressay, Fiscal Realities Economists
- Chief Clarence Louie, Ososyoos Indian Band

Labour Market Development

- Keith Conn, Human Resources & Social Development Canada
- Keith Henry, Métis Nation of BC
- Zeno Krekic, Skeena Native Development Society

Breakout sessions will take place during the conference. Conference registrants will be asked to indicate their session preferences at the time of conference registration. Conference organizers will do our best to accommodate all requests; however, we reserve the right to limit the number of people attending any one session based on room capacity.

Aussi disponible en français

What is the conference about?

Join us as leaders and experts from Aboriginal, academic, business, community, and government organizations share their best practices, experiences, success stories and challenges using data for planning and decision-making.

Conference features:

- Pre-conference workshop "Statistics for Market Analysis"
- Keynote speaker: Chief Clarence Louie, Ososyoos Indian Band
- Plenary and breakout sessions

Who should attend?

Do you work in an Aboriginal social, community, or economic development field? Leaders, managers and planners need to make decisions that address the needs of today and prepare for the challenges of the future. The ability to use data to understand trends and project impacts is critical to effective strategic planning and decision-making. As well, this conference is a great learning and networking opportunity for those seeking ideas and information on how to use data effectively.

Conference Artwork

Eagle Welcome was created by Alano Edzerza of the Tahltan Nation (Raven Clan). Eagle Welcome was inspired by the idea of celebrating Aboriginal people walking in both worlds.

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 fax transmission information service from **BC STATS**

 Email transmission information service from **BC STATS**

 also on the Internet at www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca

BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)			% change on one year ago
		Oct 1/06	
BC		4,327.4	1.2
Canada		32,730.2	1.0
GDP and INCOME (Revised Nov 8)			% change on one year ago
(BC - at market prices)		2005	
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (\$ millions)		168,855	7.2
GDP (\$ 1997 millions)		145,501	3.7
GDP (\$ 1997 per Capita)		34,173	2.4
Personal Disposable Income (\$ 1997 per Capita)		20,983	2.4
TRADE (\$ millions, seasonally adjusted)			% change on prev. month
Manufacturing Shipments - Nov		3,478	-1.5
Merchandise Exports - Nov		2,576	-7.0
Retail Sales - Nov		4,403	-1.5
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		% change on one year ago	12-month avg % change
(all items - Dec 2006)			
BC		2.1	1.8
Vancouver		2.6	1.9
Victoria		1.5	1.6
Canada		1.6	2.0
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)			% change on prev. month
(seasonally adjusted)		Dec '06	
Labour Force - BC		2,341	0.8
Employed - BC		2,218	0.4
Unemployed - BC		123	7.4
			Nov '06
Unemployment Rate - BC (percent)		5.2	4.9
Unemployment Rate - Canada (percent)		6.1	6.3
INTEREST RATES (percent)		Jan 24/07	Jan 25/06
Prime Business Rate		6.00	5.25
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year		6.50	5.80
- 5 year		6.65	6.30
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE		Jan 24/07	Jan 25/06
(avg noon spot rate) Can \$		1.1824	1.1483
US \$ (reciprocal of the closing rate)		0.8482	0.8684
AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE			% change on one year ago
(industrial aggregate - dollars)		Dec '06	
BC		739.16	4.6
Canada		731.18	2.7

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labor Force, Wage Rate } Statistics Canada
Interest Rates, Exchange Rates, Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics
For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bankofcanada.ca

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Tools for Success: Using Data in Aboriginal Communities is a conference where leaders and experts from Aboriginal, academic, business, community, and government organizations share their best practices, experiences, success stories and challenges using data for planning and decision-making.

March 5-6, 2007

Victoria Conference Centre

www.toolsforsuccess.ca/home_eng.aspx

Maps on-line (2006 Census Geography)

Maps of even the smallest geographic units for which numerous census characteristics will be produced are now available free.

www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/geo/index.cfm

Guide to the BC Economy & Labour Market
In response to requests from users of the interactive web site, the Guide is now also available in PDF format.

www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/pubs/econ_gui.asp

Updates and additions to our site

Many of the documents posted to our site include annual time-series that we update as the information becomes available. On making these updates we post a note to the recent releases listing on our what's new page.

www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/whatsnew.asp#recent

In addition to PDF format, increasingly we provide CSV equivalents for clients who require access to the data.

Released this week by BC STATS

- Consumer Price Index, December 2006
- Current Statistics, January 2007

Next week

- Business Indicators, January 2007
- Tourism Sector Monitor, January 2007



